

Guidelines on the Prevention of the Spreading of Human Swine Influenza in Social Welfare Service Units

"These guidelines apply to welfare service units in general, but excluding child care centres, special child care centres, day activity centres, sheltered workshops, training and activity centres for ex-mentally ill, integrated vocational rehabilitation services centers, integrated vocational training centres, community rehabilitation day centres, rehabilitation and training centre for the visually-impaired, day care centres for the elderly and residential services."

All service units should stay alert, be aware of the latest guidelines given by Social Welfare Department, Department of Health and other relevant departments, and draw up their own contingency measures pertinent to their setting.

1. Civic Education – Prevention of the Spreading of Human Swine Influenza Starts with the Service Units

- 1.1 Service units should explain to staff and service users the importance of personal and environmental hygiene in preventing infectious diseases, in particular the infection of human swine influenza. State the serious consequences of the spreading of human swine influenza in Hong Kong. Emphasize the fact that preventing its spread is the social responsibility of everyone in the community, and encourage the staff and service users to consult their doctors promptly and notify the service units concerned and Department of Health (DH) in case of any suspected case of human swine influenza.
- 1.2 Include relevant topics on the prevention of infectious disease / human swine influenza in activities. Adopt diverse learning modes to enhance awareness and concern among staff and service users. They should be reminded to put their knowledge into practice and to heed personal and environmental hygiene in order to avoid infection, and furthermore, convey the message to relatives and friends.
- 1.3 Disseminate the message to staff, service users and family members through seminars or newsletters, and distribute to them leaflets or relevant materials published by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) or other organisations concerned. Service users and their family members should be provided with such information as the hotline numbers and websites of DH and SWD, etc.

2. Precautionary Measures

- 2.1 Service units should draw up precautionary and contingency measures on the basis of the latest guideline issued by SWD on the prevention of the spreading of human swine influenza as well as the health advices issued by DH (such information can be downloaded from the homepage of SWD and DH: www.swd.gov.hk and www.chp.gov.hk). All staff and service users should be informed of these measures and in particular be advised of the symptoms of human swine influenza.

- 2.2 Service units should always remind their staff and service users to be aware of their own physical condition as well as other users'. If they are unwell, they should inform the supervisors of the service units immediately. It should be highlighted that if they feel unwell, especially when they develop fever and / or respiratory symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, they should wear a mask, avoid participating in indoor / outdoor group activities, be sent to an isolated or quiet place for rest; and carers for these service users should also wear a mask. These service users should then be sent home preferably accompanied by a family member or to the Accident and Emergency Department of a nearby hospital (if seriously ill) and consult a doctor. For staff, they should be sent home and consult their doctor.
- 2.3 The body temperature of service users who have difficulties in expressing themselves should be measured regularly. In case of an unusual increase in the number of staff / service users having respiratory tract infection symptoms, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of DH and the relevant Service Branches of SWD should be notified immediately (see Paragraph 5.2).
- 2.4 Staff should use appropriate Personal Protective Equipments (PPE) (such as mask and gloves) at work according to the risk of the nursing procedure and the physical condition of the service user so as to safeguard themselves and others. Service units should stock up appropriate PPE.
- 2.5 Maintain good cleanliness and ventilation in the service units. Windows should be kept open. Air filters should be cleaned frequently for air-conditioned environment. Objects and equipment frequently touched by staff and service users should be wiped with 1 part of household bleach solution diluted in 99 part water regularly. Metal objects should be disinfected with 70% alcohol. If a vehicle is used to carry service users, good cleanliness and sanitation of the vehicle compartment should be ensured as well.
- 2.6 Liquid soap and drying facilities should be provided in the toilets. Public towels should not be used. Notices should be posted inside the toilets requiring staff and service users to use liquid soap for hand washing.
- 2.7 In organising group activities, good ventilation of the venue should be taken

into account. Crowdedness should be avoided. Staff and service users who are unwell should be advised to avoid participating in the activities. Clean all equipments and game sets thoroughly before putting away or used by other groups.

- 2.8 Keep an up-to-date sick leave records of staff, staff duty roster, activity records and floor plans of service unit. Obtain their prior consent for the release of personal data, such as names and telephone numbers to DH for investigation and follow-up action as and when necessary.

3. If there is a case in the service unit, who may be a service user, a staff member or a visitor

- 3.1 To contain the spread of disease and protect public health, patients with human swine influenza require isolation and treatment in hospitals. If there is a case in the service unit, who may be a service user, a staff member or a visitor, the service unit should inform the concerned Service Branch of SWD.

- 3.2 The service unit should cooperate with the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of Department of Health (DH) in case investigation and contact tracing.

- 3.2.1 providing details of service users, staff and visitors who have contact with the index patient, activity records, staff duty roster and their sick leave records, and floor plans of the service unit;

- 3.2.2 arranging interviews with service users/staff;

- 3.2.3 facilitating CHP/DH visits to the service unit and any other actions considered appropriate to help understand how the disease has been acquired, how far it has spread and what measures are needed to contain it.

- 3.3 To prevent the spread of disease, the Department of Health may require the contacts (close or social)* to be put under medical surveillance as well as quarantine or antiviral chemoprophylaxis. Medical surveillance and quarantine usually last for 7 days from last known contact with the case, subject to latest scientific information. The close contacts should wear a mask during the medical surveillance period and ensure good personal and environmental hygiene.

****Types of contact with human swine influenza patients***

1. Close contact

A close contact is defined as a person who has cared for or lived with a case of human swine influenza, or has been in a setting where there was a high likelihood of contact with respiratory droplets and/or body fluids of a case. Close contacts include care workers who had taken care of the case without appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

2. Social contact

Social contact is any person who has come into contact with a case but not meeting the definition of close contact.

- 3.4 Depending on the type of service and nature of activities, DH may advise the service unit to suspend its services.
- 3.5 The service unit should cleanse the unit premises and commonly used equipment using 1 part of household bleach solution diluted in 49 part water for the first time (Metal objects should be cleansed with 70% alcohol) and thereafter 1 part of household bleach solution diluted in 99 part water daily. All staff and service users should also be reminded to follow the precautionary measures under paragraph 2.
- 3.6 The service unit should keep a close watch on the health condition of other staff / service users. If any staff or service users develop symptoms of human swine influenza, such as fever or respiratory symptoms, they should wear a mask, stop attending the unit and seek medical help promptly.
- 3.7 Notices should be displayed at prominent locations / newsletters should be issued to inform staff and service users and their family members / carers of the situation. By doing so, their anxieties may be relieved. Family members / carers should also be reminded to be alert of the physical condition of the service users.
- 3.8 The service unit should provide counselling to staff and service users who bear mental and psychological stress.

4. After the medical surveillance period

- 4.1 If the service has been suspended and DH considers it necessary to extend the period of suspension, the service unit should inform the concerned Service Branch of SWD, as well as services users and their family members / carers as appropriate.
- 4.2 When the medical surveillance period ends, and no other person in the service unit displays symptoms of the disease, the service unit may stay open as usual.
- 4.2.1 The service unit may stay open as usual but the health condition of all staff and service users should be closely monitored. If the situation changes, DH and the relevant Service Branches of SWD should be notified immediately.
- 4.2.2 The service unit should cleanse and disinfect the unit premises and commonly used equipment as instructed by CHP. All staff and service users should be reminded to take precautionary measures.
- 4.2.3 Inform all service users and their family members / carers of the situation so that their anxieties may be relieved. Family members / carers should also be reminded to be alert of the physical condition of the service users.
- 4.2.4 In the event of special circumstances where service unit intends to suspend its operation completely or partially, it should discuss with DH and the relevant Service Branches of SWD.

5. Support / Enquiries

5.1 Department of Health

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) : 2477 2772

Website of CHP : www.chp.gov.hk

Central Health Education Unit : 2833 0111

(24-hour pre-recorded health education hotline of DH)

Website of DH : www.dh.gov.hk

5.2 Social Welfare Department

SWD 24-hour hotline : 2343 2255

Enquiry telephone number of the Family and Child Welfare Branch : 2892 5161

Enquiry telephone number of the Youth and Corrections Branch : 2892 5130

Enquiry telephone number of the Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services : 2891 6379

Enquiry telephone number of the Elderly Branch : 2892 5400

Enquiry telephone number of the Social Security Branch : 2231 5867

(Service hours of enquiry telephone services of the Service Branches:

Monday to Friday: 8:45 am - 1:00 pm
2:00 pm - 6:00 pm)

Website of SWD : www.swd.gov.hk

5.3 24-hour Human Swine Influenza Emotional Support Hotlines (Commenced operation from 4 May 2009 initially for a period of 6 months)

Family Crisis Support Centre : 3162 8838
Caritas – Hong Kong

CEASE Crisis Centre : 2455 5859
Tung Wah Group of Hospitals